

SMCCE INTERFACE

September 1987

SANTA MARIA/LOMPOC ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

Batch Files ... What are they??

by Ray Vigant

Have you ever found yourself typing the same series of DOS commands over and over again and thinking there must be a better way. Well there is --- batch files.

A batch file is usually nothing more than a series of DOS commands which would normally be typed in at the keyboard. To create batch files, a text editor is used. The DOS commands are type in separated by semicolons, once finished the text is saved to a file. Whenever you wish to execute this sequence of commands just run the batch file.

There is one little requirement to using batch files, the DOS must support them. The following DOSes support batch files: OS/A+, MYDOS, SPARTA DOS, and TOPDOS. As far as I know, ATARI DOS 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, SMARTDOS, RANA DOS and LJK DOS do not support batch files.

There are countless uses for batch files but the most prominent example would be for those users who have their systems configured for a ram disk. A ram disk is nothing more than configuring a portion of memory to act as a high speed disk drive. Since

the drive is in memory it is extremely fast.

The role of the batch file can be to first configure the ram disk and then load it with the files which you plan to use. While the initial loading may seem quite long, the return will be realized as you access these files.

For files which will be loaded and used only once, this approach isn't very practical, but if the files are to be loaded and accessed many times the speed with which they are loaded will be a welcome change.

At this point you may be asking yourself what type of files is he referring to?? The first file to come to mind would be the dictionary used by a spell checker. If you're the type that uses a spell checker extensively you know that the disk drive runs continuously as it checks each of the documents words against its own spelling. With the ram disk since there are no moving parts there is no wear and tear.

Another application which I use quite a bit is for program development using the language C.

(I'm using Lightspeed C developed by Ralph Walden, this product was reviewed

in April 87 issue of ANALOG magazine. I'll try and provide a review of this in a later article.) The C language is a compiler language which uses a compiler, linker, editor, and a number of libraries.

A batch file loads all of the pieces listed above into the ram disk. During the course of program development batch files are called upon which will compile, link, optimize and run the source code. This is much easier than having to type the commands for each phase of the process, one command does it all.

A final example of using a batch file would be to use it as a menu or help screen. Using this approach the batch file could be named AUTORUN.BYS so that it is the first file to be executed whenever the system is turned on. An informational message could be displayed as well as instructions which can help the user. If the user is given a choice of programs to use, a batch file can be used to load the selected item.

As you can see the uses of batch files are varied. While they may seem awkward to use at first, I'm sure it will be worth the time to try.

Ray

The SANTA MARIA LOMPOC ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS is an independent ATARI Computer Users Group.

Meetings are held the First Wednesday of Each Month at the Oak Knoll Bowl in Santa Maria, at 7:00 p.m.

Memberships include a Subscription to this Newsletter and free access to the Users Disk and Technical Library, and are \$20.00 / year

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CALENDAR of coming events

Wed. Sept 2 - S.M.L.A.C.E. Meeting
Oak Knoll Bowl 7 pm
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Wed. Sept 9 - ST SIG Meeting
Jim Wooding's house
398 Highland 7-9 pm

Wed. Oct. 7 - S.M.L.A.C.E. Meeting
Oak Knoll Bowl 7 pm

Wed. Oct. 14 - ST SIG Meeting
Jim Wooding's house

Prez Sez

By Gerry Stotts

Welcome to September and "Back to School"! That's where I already am. My classes have already started and I have to play hookey to be at the September meeting! The September meeting will be to elect new officers. The club desperately needs YOUR help. If you let the club go the way it was headed about 2 years ago, before the end of 1988 there won't be a club. We need YOUR help with the club.

I am taking classes and won't be able to continue for the rest of my term. I will have to turn the club over to the new President at the September meeting. I have served this club for many years. I was instated as the Librarian just a couple of months after I joined the club. I then became the Newsletter Editor. I have been your President for the last year and a half.

If each one of you would volunteer for just one office, we would have what we need. A real election. I know that each of you are willing to take anything and everything you can get from this club. How about giving back just one time? You might be amazed at the fact that as well as giving you will also get in return.

How? You will be learning as you go about your duties. I know that each office I held, I learned as I went about doing the job at hand. I know that each officer will tell you the same thing.

If you would like to excellerate your learning curve, just volunteer for office. If you're elected you will pick up more about your computer than any other way except going to classes.

Now what else is there for September? Jim Wooding will be demoing some new things on the ST. Steve Ramm will be discussing his Disk Of the Month from last month. Maybe you will get some hints on what to do with it! So, do YOURSELF a favor. Be at the September 2nd meeting and BE HEARD! Make it known that YOU CARE! If you don't like the way YOUR club is run, NOW is the time

SECRETARY'S REPORT

by Jim Keenan

The August meeting was held at Oak Knoll Bowl, Wednesday August 6, 1987. Gerry Stotts opened the meeting and passed out the usual letters and flyers. He also announced the ACENET Fair would be September 19 & 20, in Glendale California and tickets are available from Chester Hadley. Steve Ramm explained the disk of the month. Next, Jerry introduced Philip Price, a programmer of some reputation. He gave a demonstration on a Datasoft game "Alternate Reality", which he wrote. A very interesting demo. A motion was made for SMLACE to join ACENET. A show of hands vote, FOR 16, AGAINST 0. SMLACE received a letter from COMPUTALK requesting the name and address of members. No one present objected to releasing the name and addresses but no phone numbers. All members will be contacted before the addresses are released. The floor was open for nomination of SMLACE officers for the coming year of 1988. The following nominations were made: President: Steve Ramm, V.P.: Mike Jacobson, Librarian: Pat Signs, Secretary: Don Christensen, Treasurer: Mike Townsend, ST Librarian: Doug Hadland, News Letter: Robbie Paplin. The nomination for officers is still open, so please come to the September meeting and and nominate someone who you think will be good for the club. You may also state that you would like to run for office, and your name will be added to the slate. Elections will be held following the close of nominations.

The newly elected officers will work with the outgoing officers for the remainder of the year before taking over their duties on January 1. This will allow the new officers to have a running start on the new year and hopefully a smoother transition from the old to the new. So don't miss this meeting, we need your support.

to do something about that. Not next month. That is too late. Don't make excuses. Make the meeting.

-Gerry-

NX-10 Printer codes

Back by popular demand...
by Ray Vigeant

Several club members have requested the printer codes for a Star NX10 printer for use with ATARIWRITER PLUS.

Using the Custom Printer Editor within ATARIWRITER Plus enter the following codes after each option. Consult your printer manual for different configurations.

NX10 PRINTER DRIVER

INITIALIZE EVERY LINE	BLANK
LINE FEED & CR	155
UNDERLINE OFF	27 45 0
UNDERLINE ON	27 45 1
BACKSPACE	8
ELONGATE OFF	27 87 0
ELONGATE ON	27 87 1
BOLD OFF	27 70
BOLD ON	27 69
UP 1/2 LINE	BLANK
DOWN 1/2 LINE	BLANK
DOWN 1/2 LINE & CR	BLANK
RETURN W/O LINE FEED	155
FONT 1 PICA	27 84 27 53
	27 72 18
	27 80
FONT 2 CONDENSED	27 15
FONT 3 PROPORTIONA	27 112 1
FONT 4 SUPERScript	27 83 0
FONT 5 SUBScript	27 83 1
FONT 6 ELITE	27 77
FONT 7 ITALICS	27 62
FONT 8 DOUBLE STRIKE	27 71
FONT 9 NLQ	27 120 1



SMLACE Statistics

Membership Breakdown

Santa Maria	33 (61%)
Lompoc	21 (39%)
Total	54

Computer Breakdown

	8-bit	16-bit
Santa Maria	21 (39%)	12 (22%)
Lompoc	16 (30%)	5 (9%)

VPSAYS

by Steve Ramm



Last month I visited BACE (B as in Bakersfield). They meet in a pizza parlor so in addition to a wide screen TV, they sit and eat while the meeting goes on.

Their group is about the same size as ours, maybe slightly smaller. They have the same problems that we have. They have no computer specialty stores that cater to them (we have five within an hour driving distance). At least a third of the club have ST's.

I hope all of you have looked at the Adventure game on the back side of the disk of the month. We'll be talking about it this meeting. If you're interested in learning more about playing the game, how its written or more about BASIC, bring

a listing of the game with you and when we talk about it you'll be able to follow along in your own listing.

In 1984 Jack Hardy wrote a book, "Adventures with the Atari" (Reston Publishing), in which he dealt rather extensively with adventure games. He wrote two games in Atari PILOT, two in Atari BASIC and two in Atari Microsoft BASIC. The book goes through each step of the programs and shows how they are written and at the end of the book it has two programs you can use to write your own.

If you're interested in writing your own or seeing the differences between using PILOT vs. BASIC then this would be a good book to look at. The programs come with flow charts and maps. Instead of files for locations he uses data statements on some of the programs.

Another good book for programming games is "Writing Strategy Games on Your Atari" by John White. Hayden Book Company. (c) 1983. This book goes more into the technical side of programming --- algorithms, move searches (as in chess), construction of

statements and such. The bulk of the book is on programming a chess playing game. It's aimed at the intermediate level and can be confusing unless you are really interested.

If you're just interested in programming, there are quite a few books out there that can help you. The trouble is finding them. They don't exist on the bookshelf anymore. The best thing is to get a list of publishers and write them.

There is also a good bookstore in Los Angeles that is open Monday through Friday during the day, they have no evening hours. The name of the place is Opamp Technical Books, they are located at 1033 North Sycamore Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038. They are actually in West Hollywood, just off of La Brea and Santa Monica Boulevard and are open from 9:30 to 6:30. It's been awhile since I was there, so things may have changed, but they are the largest computer books orientated store I've seen.



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ST Stuff



by Mike Jacobson

I've been playing with some new ST programs recently that I thought I would share with you. I said "playing" because I broke down and purchased some games for my ST. (Something I said I would never do to my ST). The first I will talk about is called "Road Runner" by a company called "US Gold" from England. There is some really neat software coming to the states from our fellow ATARIANS across the ocean.

From the title, you have already guessed, this is an arcade style game with you know who. This is a one player game in which you control the Road 'beep-beep' Runner being chased by the ever famous Wile E. Coyote through many action packed levels.

While keeping one step ahead of Wile E., you progress through each level eating piles of seed to keep your strength up. Each level has its own perils to avoid such as falling boulders, trucks on the highway, crevasses, and invisible paint.

Wile E. has his own bag of tricks to use while attempting to catch you. In one level, he rides a rocket and in another he uses a pogo stick to aid him in catching you. I think the pogo stick is the hardest to avoid. My wife calls it the "deadly" pogo stick. There are tricks to learn to aid you in getting through the levels, but if I tell you the tricks, then you won't have any fun learning them for yourself. All in all, it is a good action packed game with super graphics.

"PLUTOS" is another super graphics, high speed, action packed game from Mindscape, Inc. Plutos is a Galaga style game and the best way to describe it is to quote from the packaging hype. "wrap your sweaty hands around the joystick

and hang of for dear life in this outer space shootout so realistic you'll think you're there. Challenge the might of an immense mother ship bristling with weapons. Defeat swarms of alien defenders. Your mission is to destroy as much of the alien fortress' defenses as you can."

This is a very well done shoot'em up for one or two players but is much more fun with two. It is everything you go to the arcades for... except the coin slot. But beware, you will wind up with inflammation of the thumb joints from pressing the fire-button.

Enough from the world of games. I really purchased my ST for its power in the world of applications. Two such programs I would like to talk about this month are LabelMaster Elite and PrintMaster Plus. LabelMaster Elite is a feature packed program for creating fancy mailing labels with or without a graphic, 3X5 or 4X6 index cards and custom designed labels for all your disks in your ever-growing library.

LabelMaster (hereafter referred to as LM) is not copy-protected and you are encouraged to make a backup copy and store the original

in a safe place and use the backup copy as your working copy.

LM has the capability to create and store label list files for all those mailing lists that you need to maintain. The disk comes packed with designs for use in creating great looking mailing labels. (See your mailing label on this newsletter for an example of its creativeness).

LM also has the capability to create or change the existing designs and save your creations in any of the existing files or start a new one for your creations only. LM also has the capability to combine three graphics across for use in creating special 3" disk labels for your library of disks. I feel that Migraph has a real winner in this program that really allows your creative juices to flow.

In a future issue I will do a full review of PrintMaster Plus. For now, I just say that PM+ is the type of graphic program that every ST owner should have in their library. PM+ is a unique program that allows the creation of greeting cards, signs, stationery, calendars either weekly or monthly, and banners for special occasions.



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(destructus abruptus)



DANCING VOLTAGE MONKEY ROACH
(disci dumpi)



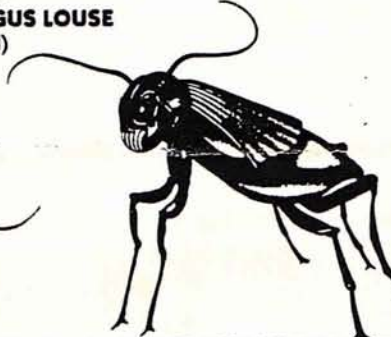
CREEPING BROWNOUT FUNGUS LOUSE
(systemii interruptii)



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(datis obliteratis)



TRANSIENT STINK FLEA
(printii garbagelli)



GIANT BLACKOUT ASSASSIN BEETLE
(monstrositus catastrophus)



RINGED-ANTENNA LINEHOPPER
(signallus distorti)

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SMLACE



PLUTOS is another super
game with super graphics
and a good action
story. All in all, it's a
great game for your
kids. Buy it now!
I'll give you the
code for the game.